

## **Questioned Documents Unit (QDU)**

### **Procedures for Conducting an Office Equipment File (OEF) Search**

#### **1 Scope**

The Office Equipment File (OEF) is a repository of typewriting and printing standards and manufacturers' information used for determining the style of type, the manufacturer, and the brand-name of office machines and type used in the preparation of documents that later become evidentiary materials. This file is for official use in law enforcement related matters to provide investigative assistance or to conduct forensic comparisons. This document applies to the Examiners and Document Analysts assigned to the QDU.

#### **2 Equipment/Materials/Reagents**

- Microsoft Access, version 2002 or later
- Manufacturers' information (found in manuals, specification documents, consumer reports, and product comparison guides)
- Computer with specifications that support the necessary software

##### **2.1 Databases and Resources**

###### **2.1.1 Typewriter Section - includes any hard type designs and is comprised of the following:**

- Interpol Classification System
- Computerized Classification System (created by QDU)
- Haas Classification System
- Similar International Business Machines (IBM) Type Style Books (created by QDU based on general type style divisions used by IBM)
- Visible standards/notebooks (collected from actual machines)
- Subfile - contains administrative and miscellaneous related information from manufacturers and product comparison guides
- Typewriter elements

###### **2.1.2 Photocopier Section - includes photocopiers and laser printer information and is comprised of the following:**

- Standards - known samples from photocopiers and laser printers
- Subfile - contains administrative and miscellaneous related information from manufacturers and product comparison guides

###### **2.1.3 Printer Section - includes impact dot matrix, thermal and ink jet information and is comprised of the following:**

- Samples from machines using the dot matrix processes

- Subfile - contains administrative and miscellaneous related information from manufacturers and product comparison guides

**2.1.4 Facsimile Section - includes processes used on facsimile machines and is comprised of the following:**

- Samples from facsimile machines
- Subfile - contains administrative and miscellaneous related information from manufacturers and product comparison guides

### **3 Standards and Controls**

Not Applicable.

### **4 Sampling**

Not Applicable.

### **5 Procedures**

An examiner may search the OEF or request the assigned analyst/technician to conduct the search. The request will be recorded in Forensic Advantage. For Legacy casework, written instructions will be given to the analyst.

#### **5.1 Typewriter Standards File**

##### **5.1.1 Search of the Non-Computerized Sections**

###### **5.1.1.1 Interpol Section**

- Refer to the Interpol classification information pamphlet for coding
- Once the typewriting to be searched is coded, conduct a visual comparison of it with the type style cards containing that code

###### **5.1.1.2 Visible Section**

- Determine the horizontal spacing and the size of type (e.g., Elite, Pica) and, if possible, the design of the type style (e.g., Conventional, Shaded, Italic, Slanted)
- Conduct a visual comparison of each type style card containing the same horizontal spacing, size of type, and design of type style

###### **5.1.1.3 Type Style Books**

- Determine the horizontal spacing and the size of type (e.g., Elite, Pica)

- Visually determine to which IBM style of type the typewriting in question corresponds based on general design (e.g., characteristics such as shading, slant, presence of serifs, and individual shapes of letters)
- Conduct a visual comparison of each type style card contained in the IBM type style named section

### 5.1.2 Haas System

To search the Haas System refer to the instructions in the Haas Atlas.

## 5.2 Search on a Particular Style of Type, Process and/or Machine from the Typewriter Database (Computerized Sections)

**5.2.1** If the computerized section of the OEF is searched by an assigned analyst/technician, the analyst will complete a *QDU-3 Typewriter Standards Computerized Search Slip* (Appendix A) and attach a printout of the search results as well as any pertinent classification information. This information may also be recorded digitally through files and notations made in the electronic case file. The completed *QDU-3*, printout, and pertinent classification information (or digital equivalent) will be retained as case records. If an examiner is conducting his/her own search, a *QDU-3* is not required.

**5.2.2** Using the search results, the examiner or analyst will visually conduct a search of the reference material or type style sections.

## 5.3 Photocopier, Printer or Facsimile Sections

**5.3.1** To locate administrative information concerning a particular printer, the examiner or analyst will search the brand name of machine in the appropriate section of the database.

**5.3.1.1** If the search is conducted by an analyst, a printout of the search results and pertinent information will be provided to the examiner and retained in the case records.

**5.3.1.2** Using the search result printout, the examiner or analyst will visually conduct a search of the appropriate reference material.

## 5.4 Machine Samples in these Sections

**5.4.1** The examiner or analyst will visually search for the sample in the appropriate section. Samples are arranged by manufacturer in model number order.

**5.5** For adding, maintaining, and searching specimens in the OEF databases, the examiner or analyst may refer to the computer and software manuals.

**5.6** The case records will include any image files, printouts, copies of standards and/or reference materials, or descriptions of any observations made that support the conclusions.

## 5.7 Conclusions

Once examinations have been completed, reports may include one or more of the following types of conclusion(s), opinion(s), and other findings, if applicable:

- The Laboratory standard(s) for a particular type most closely corresponding to the typewriting.
- The classification of the style of typewriting.
- The manufacturer of the style of typewriting.
- The make and model of machine used to produce the typewriting.
- Manufacturer, make, and model information for the photocopier, printer, or facsimile machine used to prepare the document, as applicable.
- Other information about the machine used to prepare the document.
- **No Conclusion/No Determination** - No determination could be reached as to the classification of the style of typewriting, the manufacturer of the style of typewriting, the make and model of machine used to produce the typewriting, or the manufacturer, make, and model of the office machine used, usually due to limiting factors such as insufficient quantity of material or poor condition of the item. This conclusion requires an explanation of the limiting factor(s).

## 6 Calculations

Not Applicable.

## 7 Measurement Uncertainty

Not Applicable.

## 8 Limitations

The following factors could affect the examination process and/or the results rendered:

- Search capabilities are limited to items and/or information contained in the OEF

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- Accuracy and quantity of information provided to the Laboratory

## 9 Safety

Standard precautions should be followed for the handling of chemical and biological materials. Examiners/analysts may refer to the *FBI Laboratory Safety Manual* for additional guidance. Chemical and biological materials that are hazardous or potentially hazardous will be maintained and examined in specifically designated areas within the QDU space.

## 10 References

*FBI Laboratory Safety Manual*

*QDU Quality Assurance Manual*

*Haas Atlas*, CD-ROM or DVD, American Society of Questioned Document Examiners, Long Beach, CA, 2004.

*OEF computer and software manuals*

| Rev. # | Issue Date | History  |
|--------|------------|--|
| 6      | 03/01/18   | 1 Scope, added "This document applies to the Unit Chief, Examiners, and Document Analysts assigned to the QDU." 5 Procedures, deleted "documented on the <i>QDU-1</i> or <i>QDU -1 LIMS Case Processing Center Request Sheet</i> (Appendix A)" Added, "recorded in Forensic Advantage." "For Legacy casework, written instructions will be given to the CPC. 5.2.1 changed "B" to "Appendix A" Added <i>OEF computer and software manuals</i> to references.                 |
| 7      | 09/26/19   | 1 Scope, deleted "Unit Chief." Section 5 added "assigned analyst/technician" and "analyst." Section 5.2.1 added "n" after "a", added "assigned" and "/technician." Section 5.6, added "image files."   |
| 8      | 07/01/20   | Section 5.2.1 added "This information may also be recorded digitally through files and notations made in the electronic case file." And "(or digital equivalent)". Section 5.2.2 changed "search result printout" to "search results". Section 5.7 added "if applicable" at the end of the second line of text, the first bullet "The Laboratory standard(s) for a particular type most closely corresponding to the typewriting." and "as applicable" on the fourth bullet. |

### Approval

Redacted - Signatures on File

Questioned Documents  
 Unit Chief

Date: 07/01/2020

Questioned Documents  
 Technical Leader

Date: 07/01/2020

***Appendix -A: QDU-3 Typewriter Standards Computerized Search Slip***

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